



~CONTRACTOR SUMMARIES~

Dole Fresh Vegetables Inc.

Industry: *Agriculture/Manufacturing*

Program: *Core ETP Funding*

Increasing Efficiency and Quality Through Training

Dole Fresh Vegetables Inc. was founded in 1990 as a branch of Dole Food Co. and operates across the United States and Canada, employing 60,000 workers. Dole Fresh Vegetables Inc. has a 5 percent turnover rate, with 4,000 workers in California split between two plants in Soledad and Marina in Monterey County.

Dole Fresh Vegetables Inc. is an ETP priority industry contractor located in a [High Unemployment Area \(HUA\)](#) district and operates as both an agricultural and food manufacturing company.

In their second contract with ETP, funds were requested to assist the company in their transition from an agricultural business model, with seasonal workers, to a manufacturing model with year-round workers and more career opportunities.

On September 25, 2009, the Panel approved the third contract for Dole Fresh Vegetables Inc. to train employees at the company's Soledad and Marina plants. Training targeted standardization of production and operations practices throughout the plant to increase efficiency and quality and sustain even higher levels of food safety. Training also focused on continuous improvement, as well as improvements in business and administrative activities.

To achieve the goals set by the company, administrative staff, foremen, maintenance workers, managers, production workers, and supervisors underwent training in business skills, computer skills, manufacturing skills, and continuous improvement. **Dole Fresh Vegetables received \$89,428 ETP training funds which provided training to 122 workers.**

"It has been very helpful in preparing employees for growth, advancement, and making them more effective on project teams. The next stage in our evolution in training is to help our employees get more comfortable with automation, and techniques such as statistical tools which let them measure and monitor equipment. Being better able to communicate with each other, use the technology around them with confidence, and understand how to leverage the knowledge of their supervisors and their peers is a huge benefit. I also believe we see more "loyalty" to the company as the employees are clearly seeing that we are willing to invest in them, that we are proud of them, and want to help them grow."

-Elizabeth Larkin, Manager, Dole Fresh Vegetables, Inc.